



Iulia Nistor
Two Forward, Three Back
26/01 – 09/03 2019

Mendes Wood DM Brussels is pleased to present *Two Forward, Three Back*, an exhibition of new paintings by Iulia Nistor. In her first solo show in Belgium, the Romanian-born artist features the body of work *Pieces of Evidence* – oil on wood paintings that share the same format. The exhibition also includes a first larger painting on wood.

The title *Two Forward, Three Back* refers to the painting process by which Nistor creates these works. Resulting from a method that consists of overlapping various layers of paint and repeatedly removing them with paper pressings or sandpaper, Nistor's paintings can be described as a process of excavation. For the artist, it is the regressions that result from this method of informing and discharging that imbue the sensual field.

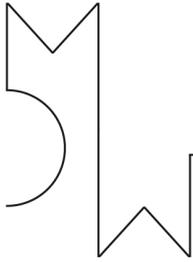
Many would argue that we live in a palimpsest, where old worlds are obfuscated by new meanings. As we 'progress' to new forms of understanding, we cover up our anachronisms, veiling them with cosmetic development. By mistaking assumptions and beliefs for knowledge, we end up acting and judging on the basis of ostensible certainties. The tendency to adopt information and simplify matters does not only result from a pragmatic necessity but is due to the nature of language and signs itself. Within our society, we have become obsessed with a form of understanding that is merely constructed but often holds no core. In a world of multifarious signifiers, a method of reexamination and careful excavation reveals an analytic view.

Nistor's work engages in an introspective process that is concerned with possible correlations of form and content, ultimately asking *in virtue of what* an image represents. Her painting process, however, does not comprise a well-planned realization of a preconceived idea. The layers do not construct the image in a traditional way. Rather, they are often contradictory towards each other or seemingly unconnected.

What constitutes the image has to be found during the process of painting. One must be prepared for things to take an unexpected turn. The act of taking away, of negating or making invisible is crucial in that it implies the readiness to question and reexamine oneself, one's ideas and understandings. It can lead us to become aware of aspects, dynamics and reasons that have perhaps gone unnoticed until now. To abandon something and begin from scratch may in fact be necessary sometimes. As Nistor removes paint, the leftover fragments sediment and form the pictorial ground. By scraping off the surface of her paintings, she uncovers a sensorial certainty – engaging the viewer in a direct phenomenological experience.

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Philosopher Nelson Goodman said: “Truth cannot be defined or tested by agreement with ‘the world’; for not only do truths differ for different worlds but the nature of agreement between a world apart from it is notoriously nebulous.” An objective truth, therefore, seems unlikely, since a multiplicity of worlds exist. What may be true in one world, may not be true in another.

In order to put things into perspective, Nistor demands that we excavate the palimpsest. That we step back from our understanding of things by distancing ourselves from our opinions and attitudes. The idea of regress in this instance should not be interpreted as a return to a former state of consciousness. Rather, it should be understood as the uncovering of implied assumptions, as the conclusion from the conditional to the condition, and eventually the calling into question of one’s own thinking. One must claim and remove, affirm and negate, scrape away at the surface not only to reveal our own method of understanding, but to arrive at a different place and stand on a different ground.

Iulia Nistor (1985, Bucharest) lives and works in Berlin, Germany.

Her solo exhibitions include: *Canary in a coal mine*, Plan B, Berlin (2017); *Before Interpretation*, Galeria Electroputere, Craiova (2015); *.../.../...*, Strabag Kunstforum, Vienna (2015); *(i)... (ii)... (iii)... (iv)...*, Aiurart Contemporary Art Space, Bucharest (2014).

Her work has been presented in group exhibitions such as *After Rubens*, Städelmuseum, Frankfurt am Main (2017); *Track Changes*, Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo (2016); *Gardeners Digest - The Yew*, Societas Horti (CCA), Tbilisi (2016); *The Real Kiss*, JOHAN, Frankfurt am Main (2016); *DIY Immortality Program (MTL II)*, Heute, Nuremberg (2015); *Into Black*, Sala Tipografia, Bucharest (2015); *Preisträgerausstellung*, Strabag Kunstforum, Vienna (2014); *Escapes: Colony. Endocosmos. Ulysses. Unsent Postcards*, Museo Guerra Junqueiro, Porto (2013).

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